



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ON SOME MISCONCEPTIONS OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY BY EACH OTHER¹.

I ACCEPTED the invitation to become the Honorary President of your Society for the ensuing year with considerable hesitation. In ability and in learning I should cut a poor figure if compared with many of the distinguished men who have been your Presidents in years gone by. But the liberality of spirit manifested in your invitation, and the compliment contained in it both to me personally and through me to the religious community to which I belong, seemed alike so novel and so striking, that I dared not refuse your offer.

Whether you will rue your choice remains, however, to be seen.

Now in casting round for a subject on which to address you, I tried to find one in which my defects of learning might least appear, and in which, on the other hand, my qualities, or may I say, my peculiarity, would have the fullest opportunity and field.

Running the risk of seeming unduly personal, may I briefly state to you wherein that peculiarity, as I suppose, consists?

I will put it to you as impersonally as I can. Let me suppose that one of you, a Christian, lived in a country where the vast majority of the inhabitants professed the Mahommedan religion. Assume, further, that this country was highly civilized, and that in all matters political, social,

¹ An Address delivered before the Theological Society of the University of Glasgow, November 25, 1895.

and even ethical, you were thoroughly identified in interest and feeling with your Musulman fellow-citizens. Imagine, further, that some, perhaps the majority, of your dearest friends were Mahommedans, that you had graduated in a Mahommedan university where all your teachers had been Musulmans, at all events in name, and that the man to whom even religiously you owed the deepest debt of gratitude and enlightenment was, if I may say so, a Broad-mosque Mahommedan priest. Let me further suppose that the literature you read and loved was, in the wide sense of the word, distinctly Mahommedan—so that a Moslem Browning was your favourite poet, or a Moslem ‘In Memoriam’ your favourite poem;—and finally let me assume that, as would be only natural, you were interested in the history and development of that Mahommedan religion which formed so important and subtle a part of your own intellectual and spiritual environment, and that you had read reverentially, if critically, its sacred writings and early records. Your position, at least to yourself, would be a curious and complex one. For to continue my analogy, I must ask you to make the monstrous and unhistorical assumption that Mahommed and his chief apostles had been themselves Christians, and that Mahommedanism was often regarded as the true development and perfect efflorescence of Christianity. It was an axiom of Mahommedan theology, it almost seemed an axiom of Mahommedan culture, that Christianity was a religion of preparation, or a religion of childhood, or a religion for the hardness of men’s hearts, or a religion of contradictions, or a religion of onesidedness, but that Mahommedanism was the religion of fulfilment, the religion of manhood, the religion of love, the religion in which onesided abstractions were united and reconciled in a higher and more truthful unity. Christianity indeed, for all the Musulman divines and philosophers seemed to know or care, had ceased to be when Mahommedanism was born of it.

Now if, in spite of all these arguments and assumptions,

you still remained a Christian and felt no need of change, if, while refusing to believe that the perfect or absolute religion either existed or could exist, you still considered that, in certain important respects, Christianity was, or might become, truer, purer, and wider even than Mahommedanism itself,—if, I say, *this* was your belief, while what we have heard just now were your training and environment, your position might perhaps be regarded as curious by your Mahommedan friends and fellow-citizens as well as by yourself. They would probably add to curious the less gratifying adjectives of unstable and untenable. This, however, by the way. What I wish to indicate is that, with such a belief and such a training, you would approach the *critical study of both* Christianity and Mahommedanism with certain special peculiarities. Many and many a Mahommedan professor and divine would be far abler and far more learned than yourself. But in the study and appraisal of Christianity, would you not have this advantage over them, that you would know it from within, so that much which seemed evil or irrational to them might seem reasonable and ethical to you? The same idea which, when expressed in a Mahommedan form, they understood and loved, they might fail to recognize in its Christian envisagement. But your mingled and complex training, half-Christian and half-Mahommedan, might lead you well, if your mind were open, while maintaining a full allegiance to your own faith, to acquire a truer knowledge and therefore a more impartial admiration for both Mahommedanism and Christianity.

I can even imagine it possible that just because of these very peculiarities, and not because you were very able or very learned, a liberal Mahommedan theological society might invite you to deliver among them a Presidential Address.

Now dropping my rather forced analogy, I naturally ask myself how can I best use or exploit my own peculiarities for *your* benefit?

The answer seems to me to be partly contained in the familiar lines of your own great poet:

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us.

It is perhaps no less useful for Christians to know what Jews think of Christianity than for Jews to know what Christians think of Judaism.

But to consider the, if I may say so, *insularly* Jewish conception of Christianity, and the *insularly* Christian conception of Judaism, would be obviously too great a task for a single address. I therefore only propose to touch upon some misconceptions of one by the other, and, in conclusion, upon certain peculiar excellences of either which are commonly claimed as their own special characteristics by both.

There are several obvious reasons why the adherents or expounders of one religion should misrepresent and misconceive another. There is prejudice, there is ignorance, there is the natural habit of ascribing all the virtues to one's own party, nation, or creed. If our party possesses all the virtues (and why else do we belong to it?), nay more, if its virtues are its characteristics, what can there remain for the other party to possess but vices? In vices, or at least in defects, its characteristics lie. Over and above all these natural and obvious reasons, there is the following: the habit we all have of using another religion as a foil to our own.

Comparisons are odious, says the proverb; but just because of their sting therefore are they made. The object of comparisons is to draw contrasts. But the simplest kind of contrast, as well as the most violent, is the contrast between good and bad. The deeper the shadow, the brighter the light. We therefore pick out in the contrasted religion those rites, laws, sayings, and dogmas which best set off the excellence and beauty of our own. All others we neglect. In our own religion we ignore the evil as accidental or

temporary: we accentuate the good as essential and abiding. In the opposed religion, on the other hand, the defective and the evil elements are typical, and the age, where they are most apparent, is for our purposes the most typical age in that religion's history.

And yet, of a truth, religions are much too complicated and delicate for such crude and clumsy comparisons. We cannot squeeze them into our systems and theories and contrasts without doing them violence. Nay, we often misrepresent—it may be by indiscriminate laudation, it may be by philosophic but inaccurate exegesis ('making the implicit explicit')—our own religion, as well as the religion to which and with which we contrast it.

But if I have, by implication and innuendo, accused both Jewish and Christian divines of unhistorical exaggeration, let me hasten to add that in this very address, while reprobating their exaggeration, I shall exaggerate myself. For in order, within my short compass of time, to explain the procedure I deprecate, I must exaggerate it. To make you see it clearly and quickly, I must depict it on a scale which as a fact it rarely assumes, and I must ignore all varieties of manner and degree.

With this caution and proviso, let me put the following question: when a Christian theologian, like Professor Pfleiderer or many another, is comparing and contrasting Christianity with Judaism, what is the Judaism to which he refers? It would be, I believe, most accurately described as a lifeless abstraction obtained by collecting together every feature of the Rabbinical religion, which either is or seems opposed to some characteristic excellence of Christianity. These features massed together he regards as Judaism. Such others as do not agree with them are either entirely ignored or summarily dismissed as exceptional, untypical, uncharacteristic. And by this method he gets a most serviceable and attractive foil.

In using the Old Testament, as an illustration and a proof of the Judaism thus obtained, Christian theologians

seem often to forget that all its twenty-four divisions and not merely the Pentateuch and the book of Esther constitute the Jewish Bible. The procedure they adopt is to regard every sentence which dovetails with modern Christianity, as *not* characteristically Jewish. What *is* typical of Judaism is the remainder. And it is just this remainder, *plus* its monstrous exaggerations and fungoid outgrowths in the Rabbinical literature (while all but these are rigorously ignored) which is *Judaism*.

For example, the fundamental command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is not characteristically Jewish, but the trivial ordinance, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed," is delightfully typical. The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, describing the prophetic conception of a fast, is *not* characteristically Jewish, but the formal ritual enjoined in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus *is*. The omnipresence of God taught in the 139th Psalm is *not* characteristically Jewish, but "I hate them with perfect hatred" *is*. Ecclesiastes is without question the most un-Jewish book in the Old Testament, but I have often seen the pessimism of Ecclesiastes described as characteristic of Judaism, and the pessimism of Judaism proved by an appeal to Ecclesiastes.

The Rabbinical literature is dealt with on similar lines. If one Rabbi says, "Be not like servants who minister to their master upon the condition of receiving a reward," that is *not* characteristically Jewish, but if another says, "According to the labour is the reward," *that* is typical Judaism. If one Rabbi speaks tremblingly of the awful and holy God, before whom all men must bow the knee in fear and awe, you can quote it as characteristic; if another speaks of the forgiving and merciful God before whom fear may be driven out by love, you must ignore it as an unfortunate and accidental intrusion.

In fine, the method of contrasts forbids its employers to attempt a critical appreciation which shall do justice to the varied elements of a complex phenomenon, or to

consider how far the elements of good may throw light upon the elements of evil; it induces them simply and solely to collect the dross and to fashion the foil.

But I must not spend all my time upon one series of misconceptions. Let me therefore now proceed to ask, What does the Jewish divine mean when he contrasts Christianity with Judaism? First of all, what does he mean by Judaism? He means by it not the Judaism of the Rabbis, Christ's contemporaries, but modern Judaism, cleansed, purified, and widened by the progress of the centuries. Or if he does not mean this, he means that precise combination of good and noble elements in the Old Testament and the later literature which constitute the basis of his own religion. By Christianity he means those specific dogmas of the church, which are opposed to *his* Judaism, in their crudest and baldest form. Or again, he means by it those particular passages and incidents in the New Testament which form a foil to his own conception of Judaism. Elements which are common to his own Judaism are not characteristically Christian, nor does he ever pause to inquire whether any of these elements may not indirectly have been either acquired, or at any rate clarified and isolated, for Judaism through the action and influence of Christianity.

Any deep utterance of Jesus, however integral a part of his doctrine as a whole, if it can but be paralleled by a chance adage of the Old Testament or the Talmud, is at once dismissed as wholly untypical. By a combined process of disintegration and parallelism the most essential and certainly the best elements in the moral and religious teaching of the Founder are denied to the credit either of himself or of Christianity. But whatever in the New Testament is most opposed to modern Judaism, that is characteristically Christian. The barren fig-tree and the Gadarene swine, the demons and evil spirits, these are typical. The forced and inaccurate exegesis, the miraculous cures, the doctrine of the end of the world and of the right

neglect of all earthly affairs, the depreciation of family life, the furnace and the gnashing of teeth, the hypocrites and vipers and serpents and children of hell, the spirit of God descending like a dove ; these things and all that they imply are characteristic and essential. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us," is not characteristically Christian, but "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" assuredly is. The beauty of charity is constantly extolled in the Talmud, and therefore the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians is not specifically Christian, but if St. Paul asserts that no man can be saved except by believing in Christ, *that* is typical, and perhaps the most characteristically Christian sayings in all the world are the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed.

It is not my purpose in this address to estimate the degree of inaccuracy in the various specific misconceptions of Judaism by Christianity or of Christianity by Judaism. But I shall now proceed to mention some of the misconceptions individually, not to adjudicate upon their measure of error as treated by the Judaism and the Christianity of this or of any bygone age, but in order to show you that the very same misapprehensions which are made by Christians about Judaism are also made by Jews about Christianity! I will not ask whether there now are phases, or whether there have been periods in the history of both religions in which these misapprehensions contained some truth as well as much error, and whether therefore the moral of the whole story is that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. But through the close similarity of the charges, I will simply draw the moral of toleration and mutual respect on the one hand, and of the grave necessity for the utmost caution and circumspection in religious criticism and theological comparisons upon the other.

1. Apart from its alleged "abstract" and therefore erroneous idea of unity, the Jewish conception of God is commonly

criticized as ethically and spiritually inadequate. The God of Judaism is a God of justice, but he is not a God of love. Moreover, partly because of the external way in which he is regarded—he is without but not within—and partly because the only relation which Jews can know towards him is that of slaves to their lord, while their only service is that of an endless and unfulfillable series of disconnected and arbitrary commands; in virtue of all these reasons the God of Judaism is distant and remote, unapproachable, unattainable, ever sought for, never found. Such, with endless varieties of detail and expansion, is the Christian conception of the Jewish God. Side by side with it let me now place the Jewish conception of the Christian God in its contrast with the God of Judaism.

To the Jewish mind God is a father in very deed—"like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him"—to *his* mind God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy; to *his* mind God himself, the Father everlasting, is always accessible and near to his human children. Between the child and his Father in heaven there is, and there needs to be, no mediator or go-between. Great as the Father is, he is also ineffably gentle and tender; wherever the Bible mentions God's greatness it also mentions his humility, as the Talmud says: and therefore God the father is ever ready to hearken and to save. Whereas to the Christian, God is so distant and so terrible, that he can only be approached and appeased through a mediator or intercessor, half human and half divine. He will have blood for blood, even if the blood be that of his own son. The justice and love of God are arbitrarily severed from each other: the Father is just, the Son is loving, so that the unity of the divine attributes is weakened and destroyed. The Christian believes in a horrible dogma called the Fall of Man, in virtue of which because our first parents sinned, every subsequent human being is liable to be damned everlastingly with real and material pains. The only method by which this frightful

issue could be averted was by the incarnation of a part of the Deity in the shape of a man, and by his self-chosen death upon the cross. Yet even this strange expedient only partially cancelled the evil effects of God's cruel and unjust decree, for he further arranged that none but those who believed in the dogma of the incarnation should reap its benefits. All others, and most certainly all Jews, Turks and Infidels who, living within the range of Christian influences, are yet not inclined to become Christians, God will surely consign to everlasting damnation in real and unquenchable fire.

2. For a second and very simple misconception of modern Judaism by Christians and of modern Christianity by Jews, let us take the conditions which either religion is supposed to lay down for man's attainment of eternal bliss. The Christian appears to think that the sole condition which Judaism imposes is the external one of race. The future life is the prerogative of the Jew, who will find in heaven ample recompense for his prolonged sufferings upon earth. The heavenly gates are shut upon the Gentile. The Jew, on the other hand, supposes that the Christian idea of salvation is restricted and immoral, his own liberal and generous. For, according to him, Judaism teaches that God looks to character and conduct, and to these only in his capacity as judge. The religious dogmas which a man happens to have been taught and to believe are of no account or importance in this regard: the good life is all. "The righteous of all nations shall have a share in the world to come:" that, according to the Jewish divine, is the doctrine of the Talmud and of modern Judaism¹. Whereas the Christian, or at least the Protestant, has devised and believes in a terrible dogma called justification by faith, according to which orthodoxy of belief is the

¹ It is certainly the doctrine of modern Judaism. Whether it is the doctrine of the Talmud, I will permit myself to doubt. The mediaeval Talmud in this respect is no better and no worse than the mediaeval Church.

standard by which human destiny beyond the grave is reckoned and adjudged. Conduct is at best an adjunct; without right belief it will, however noble, be wholly without avail. Only true believers may enter at the gates of heaven.

3. No charge is more frequently brought against Judaism than that of a superficial and outward conception of sin. First of all the Jew does not really understand the full heinousness of sin, but secondly—and this is the only point I will make to-day—he adopts an erroneous mental and moral attitude towards it. This is partly due to the fact that he has never realized the true nature of goodness. He thinks goodness is doing; he knows nothing of being. Moreover, good doing is to him the legal performance—neither more nor less—an end of an endless series of isolated commands. Some of these commands are ritual, some are moral, but he puts them both on precisely the same footing of importance. He does not fulfil the moral commands because they are moral, but because they happen to be on the list, as also, by the way, because he hopes by means of them to gain a reward. The consequence is twofold. Either he obeys a whole string of these commands, and is puffed up with pride and self-righteousness, or he is conscious that there are a number of them which he has been unable to discharge, and is cast down by self-reproach and self-despair. Both these attitudes of mind, be it the proud and Pharisaic sense of “merit” or the apparently equally Pharisaic feeling of despair, serve alike as delightful foils and contrasts to the Christian’s conviction of his own personal unworthiness combined with a humble and sustaining belief in his reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ.

An equally delightful contrast is afforded to the Jew by his conception of Christianity in these particulars. The Jew, he says, is humble and yet cheerful. What the all wise and all good God has revealed to him as his duty, that he seeks to do. God has given him the capacity to be

good and to do good, to choose the right and avoid the wrong, within certain limits, but God has made all men frail, and to sin in greater or less degree is a necessity for us all. Hence the Jew throws himself upon the mercy of God, and he believes that that mercy will be freely vouchsafed to him. Much he cannot do: very good he cannot be, but then he is but dust, and his heavenly Father will judge him according to his meagre powers. So simple and so encouraging is the religion of Judaism. Whereas Christianity teaches that the natural man can accomplish nothing, and that his utmost endeavours are nothing worth. All must be done for him supernaturally; by himself and through himself he is powerless. All those who feel no personal and inward assurance of salvation through the accuracy and vividness of their faith can but regard themselves as sinners before God. Their moral virtues avail them nought. Whereas they who have this inward and saving conviction are, and know themselves to be, the salt of the earth: what need for them to labour and to sweat in the heat and dust of social service and moral endeavour? For them the goal is gained; the prize is won. They are filled with smug and puritanic satisfaction in the certainty of their own salvation, in the assurance of their neighbour's doom. Self-righteousness or self-despair, these are the logical issues of Christian theology.

The contrast, you observe, is in this instance, both for Jew and Christian, almost identically the same!

4. A fourth amusing and yet highly instructive misconception may be found in the respective views of Judaism and Christianity (as interpreted by one another) of the relation of this life on earth to another life beyond the grave. It used to be commonly asserted by Christian theologians that Judaism knew nothing, in any proper and spiritual sense, of a future life. The true desire and longing of the Jew were for success and happiness upon earth: his ideal future was of a time when his own people should be restored to Palestine, and, with their feet

upon the neck of their enemies, should be possessed of all imaginable goods—real, tangible, material goods. Here was a capital foil to the Christian's longing for heaven, to his yearning towards that unearthly life where his treasure abides for ever and where his heart is also even now.

The Jewish divine, on the other hand, was (and is still) wont to claim that Judaism assigns to each life its proper value and place. "This world," says the old Jewish rabbi (and our Jewish authorities tell us that he is but giving voice to the general doctrine of Judaism), "this world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest enter into the hall." But though the future life, spiritually conceived and interpreted, is as much a dogma of Judaism as of Christianity, yet the life of the vestibule must not be disregarded or treated lightly. We are put in the world to make it better; it is not, and it should not be, as Christianity esteems it, a vale of tears. It is no merit (as Christianity teaches) to despise the innocent joys of earth or to be gloomy and sorrowful: it is as much our duty to laugh with those who laugh as to weep with those that weep, to accompany the bridal procession as to walk beside the funeral bier. Above all, no thought of heaven to come must prevent us from doing all we can to lessen earthly evils, to fight against oppression and cruelty, to rectify social wrongs, to establish social well-being. A kingdom of heaven upon earth must be the aim of man upon the earth: and that too is his best preparation for the life of the world to come.

Such till quite recently was the nature of the contrasts drawn by Jewish and Christian divines on this question of worldliness and other-worldliness. But upon the Christian side the contrast is slowly changing, so that the Jews, who take their cue from their neighbours, will, I suppose, change their contrast likewise.

For the true essence of Christianity is now said to consist not in a life to come, in the ordinary sense of the

word (that is slightly too supernatural for our present moods), but in a regenerate life on earth. "The kingdom of heaven is within you," "The kingdom of heaven is among you;" and these phrases are interpreted to mean that the new Christian principle is slowly to regenerate, in orderly and stable evolution, the life of man upon the earth.

A new contrast is therefore needed, and in these cases where a new contrast is needed it is speedily found! Judaism despaired and despairs of this world: it could and can only hope for improvement and redemption by violent, supernatural interference from an external *Deus ex machina*. This world is bad: man is corrupt: the future is hopeless, unless God in an arbitrary and lawless manner suddenly interposes his rearranging hand from without and creates a new heaven and a new earth. The divine spirit and grace, working from within, and slowly transforming man and his world by orderly sequence and rational law, the human drama regarded as the gradual evolution of God in man to better and fuller self-consciousness—all this, the distinctive note and teaching of true Christianity, is wanting utterly in Judaism.

So Judaism which erewhile loved this world too much, now despairs of it; and Christianity which before took no thought of this world or of the morrow, is now declared to be the religion which teaches gradual evolution and orderly social progress. It is probable that the former and the present contrast will thus be reconciled: it will be said that since abstraction on the one side easily topples over into abstraction upon the other, the Jewish despair of the world was really material love of it in another shape, for all that the Jews hoped to get by the irregular and mechanical interference of God was but another earth, on which they, made righteous by miracle but with hearts unregenerate and unpurified, should wash their feet in the blood of their enemies and exult in riches and prosperity for evermore.

5. As my fifth and last item in the list of misconceptions

I will mention one which properly covers a large ground, but of which I can only just touch upon the fringe or outskirt. I have already mentioned the fact that the Christian theologian is wont to regard Judaism as the preparatory stage of a religious process the culmination or fulfilment of which he sees in Christianity. In Judaism there accordingly inhere all the imperfections characteristic of such a preparatory creed. Christ fulfilled the law. And that is the best thing that can be said of it. Christ, moreover, was a veritable touchstone. The recognition of his divinity, of his higher teaching, of the fact that he did fulfil and thereby supersede the law, marked off, at the time of his earthly career, the open-eyed, humble and unprejudiced Jew from his dull, proud, and jaundiced fellow-countrymen. Even as the few good Jews of his age believed in Christ, so the few good elements of Judaism were absorbed in Christianity, while its remaining elements which were not thus absorbed continued to form and to fashion the characteristics of Rabbinic Judaism from the first century to the present hour. Let me here add that a great and signal instance of imperfection in the Judaism superseded by Christ is its hopeless confusion of ritualism with religion, as exemplified by its dietary laws, its rite of fleshly circumcision, its material sacrifices, and its horror of outward and bodily uncleanness.

How far truth and misconception are here mingled together I stay not to inquire. Without comment I place alongside of this criticism of Judaism the following criticism of Christianity. To the Jewish divine, Christianity rests upon a perversion of scripture only excusable in the ignorant and the unlettered. When God gave his law as "an ordinance for ever," he did not juggle with words and mean for a season. When God said the advent of Messiah should usher in the permanent reign of justice and of peace, he was not deceivingly alluding to a second advent, by which Messiah might perchance make good the fiasco of the first. Christianity is an accommodation and watering-

down of pure ethical monotheism for the benefit of the heathen. It was intended by God as a stepping-stone for the nations on the road to Judaism. The man-God, the Virgin Mary and her worship, the adoration of saints and images and relics are all accommodations. The doctrine of Judaism was too spiritual and pure for the heathen to adopt. A purely spiritual God, without mediator or intercessor, was beyond their ken and comprehension. In other ways, too, Christianity shows how the pure ore of Judaism was mixed with baser metal. An alloy may have been necessary, but it is none the less real. Judaism boldly grapples with the problem of evil, and rests in absolute ideal faith upon the goodness of God. Its trust is unconditioned, though there be nothing between Evil and the Divine Omnipotence. But Christianity attempts to make things easier to the popular mind by the fiction of a Devil, who whether as Satan or Beelzebub or Prince of this World, plays so important and integral a part in Christian religion and theology. The Mosaic sacrificial rites were instituted because nobody at that time could dispense with sacrifices and blood, but Judaism has risen superior to all such conceptions, nay, it rose superior to them even in the teaching of the Prophets. Christianity was, however, compelled to return to the general and popular point of view of the heathen world—"without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin;" and hence it presented to the heathen mind the materialistic but attractive doctrine of the atonement of Christ. The keynote of the Jewish and Rabbinic theory of Atonement is Repentance, the keynote of the Christian theory is Blood. Thus the same immaturity and preclusiveness which the Christian discerns in Judaism the Jew recognizes in Christianity.

In all the misconceptions which we have been here considering, it would, I think, be shown by an impartial historian of religion that truth and falsehood are strangely blended together. But if you, as Christians, are fully convinced that in these appreciations of Christianity which

I have ventured to submit to you, there is a large percentage of error, of prejudice, and of direct misstatement, I beg of you also to believe that such a percentage is at least as great in the current estimates of Judaism by Christian theologians and philosophers. Shall we do rightly if we say that neither side attempts to understand the other: each seems to move along a separate plane, and the high estimate of its own creed, obtained by a process of elimination and selection, seems to bear no reference and to contain no answer to the weighty attacks involved in the criticisms of the other. And yet perhaps such a creature as the "impartial historian" of religion, to whom I have just alluded, can hardly exist. For can you estimate and understand a religion aright unless you have grown up in it or unless you believe in it? Are not certain aspects, whether of persons or of religions, only knowable by familiarity and by affection? Has not Love peculiar powers of criticism that are all his own? Even faults may have in them a soul of good, and become cherished for what they imply as well as for what they seem and are. May we not to some extent apply to our religions what the wife said of her husband:

The man was my whole world all the same,
With his flowers to praise, and his weeds to blame,
And either or both to love.

And now let me, in the few moments that remain, pass away from misconceptions to something at once more doubtful and yet more positive. Let us imagine that there existed now, or that there should come to exist, a religious community, of which the adherents called themselves neither Jews nor Christians, but simply Theists, like Mr. Voysey's congregation in London, or used some other similar appellation. Let us further imagine that this community had been equally recruited in its formation both from whilom Jews and whilom Christians, and that they attempted to ascertain which among the various tenets of their faith were due more distinctively to

Christianity, and which of them were due more distinctively to Judaism.

I fancy that about some of them they would find it very difficult to come to any final agreement. On a division the numbers would be equal on either side. Assuming that each section still retained a deep affection for the mother faith, it is likely that either party would claim the source of certain common tenets for its own original creed. Thus the Love of God, the deep sense of sin, the need and nature of a true atonement, might probably be claimed alike by both Christian and Jew. Yet with regard to certain other of their tenets, we might perhaps assume a sufficient detachment from the religions of their earlier life to enable them to arrive, by an adequate majority, at some satisfactory understanding.

1. The first entry upon the Jewish list would be the conception of Deity. The love of God which is also justice, the justice of God which is also love: the Unity, manifested alike in God's transcendence beyond the world and in his immanence within it, but most of all in his own self-consciousness, the eternal harmony and changelessness of the divine nature, the absence of intermediary upon the one hand or of enemy upon the other between the human child and the Divine Father, — these things, in which our new community *ex hypothesi* believe, they will regard as a debt they owe not to Christianity but to Judaism.

2. Next to this fundamental conception of their faith, they will regard as Jewish the relation which they believe to subsist between Religion and Morality. Not through belief but through conduct lies the best and surest approach towards God, and in the last resort, however dangerous the opposition, man is "justified" of works rather than of faith. "Religion," says Robertson somewhere, "is goodness. To love God and to love man is Christianity: all else is only husk and shell." A Jewish Robertson would say precisely the same, putting Judaism in the place of Christianity, and in the opinion of our latter-day theists, he would say it

with greater truth. To believe in God according to certain metaphysical formulae, to believe in the accuracy of certain narratives or in some particular interpretation of their most doubtful and difficult parts, to believe in three rather than in two or in four fixed "aspects" or *ὑποστάσεις* of Deity,—these things do not constitute the substance of religion, but rather "to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

3. Hence, as the third entry on the Jewish side of the account, will come that practical desire to redress social wrongs, and to maintain and develop social right, which is so permanent a characteristic of our own age. I know that Christian writers are at present actively engaged in claiming this feature too of an unsectarian and labelless religion as purely Christian, but a truer view of history would, I think, regard it as essentially Jewish, reflected and manifested alike in Jewish legislation, in Jewish prophecy, and in the Jewish life and literature of the later and post-biblical periods. "Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Yes, justice and ever again justice: yes, righteousness and ever again righteousness: these watch-words of religion are intrinsically and essentially Judaic. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." So says St. James. Yes, but does not Luther say that St. James is a Judaizer?

4. A fourth element which the Jewish members of our imaginary religion seem to have contributed to the common stock is the love of the community. Their ideal of life is social: first the home, with all its sanctities—and the Jew always prides himself upon the cohesion and purity of his home life—and then the home broadening out into the wider brotherhood of the religious community. The Jewish idea and ideal of the relation of the individual to

the community come strangely near to the Hellenic idea and ideal of the relation of the citizen to the state. There is nobody and there is nothing between man and God: and yet man is hardly human in isolation, whether from the point of view of politics, or from the point of view of religion. The hermit, or the ascetic, or the monk could never have become religious ideals to any pure development of Judaism, uncrossed by alien influences from without.

5. There is a quality of which modern Jews often boast as regards their own religion, which many thinkers would not regard as a quality at all, and yet our theistic community might be inclined to set it down as a good thing to the credit of the Jewish list. It is simplicity. Our theists and modern Jews seem alike in this: they have few dogmas; and those they have are, in a certain sense, comprehensible by all. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God; the Lord is one." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Through thy light we see light,"—the doctrines or dogmas contained in verses such as these, which are the common property both of the theist and the Jew, seem to appeal at once to the sage and to the clodhopper, and to be capable of uniting them actively together within a single community. The clodhopper need not feel that his religion is other than the sage's: the sage need not feel that his religion is too hopelessly removed from the clodhopper's. The philosopher will fill out those great and simple sayings with a wider and a deeper meaning: but, in order to accept them as his own, he will not have to explain them away. Simplicity and comprehensive unity, as thus explained and defined, will therefore be put down to the credit of Judaism.

6. A sixth and final Jewish excellence may be found in a quality a little difficult to explain, but yet perfectly real. We might paraphrase it as the religious transfiguration of the natural life. Religion in everyday life is a characteristic Jewish ideal. The profound utterance of the Midrash that "man must serve God with his evil

inclination no less than with his good" contains within it a vital element of Judaism. It means that those sides and elements in life which rest fundamentally upon mere animal impulse—eating and drinking, the procreation of children, the acquisition of wealth—must be transfigured by religion, and become themselves part and parcel of our service of God. Nor, so far as they are themselves a pleasure to the "natural" man, shall they cease to be a pleasure to the man transfigured. For Judaism is essentially a religion of joy, and the Jews have ever found in their service of God, however strangely manifested to unaccustomed eyes, a joy and a beatitude, upon the average, in all probability, deeper, more constant, and more pervading than has accompanied the service of any other religious brotherhood or community. It is customary, in books of Christian theologians, to label only the casuistical dialectic of St. Paul or any other feature of his teaching which is unsympathetic to the writer as specifically Jewish. But there is no more Jewish verse—and we may take it even in a wider or more general sense than he originally meant it—through all his epistles than this: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Even sleep may be turned into a service of God, says Maimonides, quoting the adage of the Talmudic doctors, "Let all thy doings be wrought in heaven's name."

I pass now to those elements in their theistic faith which the members of our imaginary community would ascribe to the influence and credit of Christianity.

1. First of all will come a high and spiritual estimate of suffering and sorrow. "Adversity is the blessing of the New Testament." No race has shown so high a capacity for martyrdom, or has produced so many martyrs, as the Jews. "If there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations: if the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land." Nevertheless, the adequate appreciation of sorrow and of suf-

fering, and of their place and value in human life, is due rather to Christianity than to Judaism. The philosophic idealism of Plato which taught that it is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it, that the misery of wickedness is greater far than the misery of pain, and that the highest joy may be realized in a life of suffering consciously incurred for the sake of goodness and of truth, was first preached as a religious faith by Jesus and his disciples.

2. And, secondly, they would decide that their conception of sacrifice and self-sacrifice was originally or distinctively Christian. These two items are also mentioned by Paulsen in his delightful *System der Ethik* among the three or four great truths which Christianity has graven on the spiritual life of man. For the honour of the other two Jew and Christian might justly wrangle, but if, as Paulsen puts it, the world realizes that it lives through the voluntary self-sacrifice, even unto death, of the innocent and the just, this should, I fancy, be put down to the distinctive glory of Christianity. It is true that if, as Paulsen also says, the history of humanity be the history of martyrdom, and if the text of the sermon which is constituted by that history be the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the ultimate source which we seek is in the Old Testament and not in the New. But it is a singular fact that even as that wonderful chapter is almost unprepared for by what precedes it and wholly fails to influence what follows, so it seems to have had comparatively little effect upon the general trend and development of Jewish theology and religion. If the spring, therefore, lies on Jewish soil, the fructifying river is Christian.

3. Perhaps our imaginary community would put as a third item upon the Christian list their religious views about enemies. They would not fail to allow that the assertion "Thou shalt love *thy* neighbour and hate *thine* enemy," by whomsoever made, was an unfair misrepresentation of Old Testament teaching; but they would agree that the injunction "Bless them that curse you, do good to them

that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you," and the dying appeal "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," suggest an ideal of conduct which, though by none perhaps more conspicuously neglected than by the nominal disciples of their Master, has sunk deep into the human consciousness, and will never lose to the mind of civilized man either its value or its truth.

4. For the fourth item on the Christian side of the account, they would put down the value which their religious tenets compel them to assign to the human souls of all men, whether wise or stupid, bad or good, civilized or outcast. Every man, black or white, cultured or savage, is a child of God, and must therefore have independent value in our own eyes and in the eyes of Deity. Before God the difference between saint and sinner fades away. Even as a unit or a million subtracted from infinity leaves equally infinity, so when we bring our best unto him, we feel that we are unprofitable servants still and no merit pertains to us. The yearning pity for the sinner and the outcast, the humility of the true savior of souls who, while never ceasing to accentuate the horror of sin, bridges over and even annuls the moral chasm between the basest criminal and himself, have been delightful characteristics of both the two great branches of Christianity in their highest and purest forms.

5. As a fifth item they would certainly reckon the absolute freedom of their religion from any connexion with race. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: all are one before God." "Before God" the adherents of our imaginary religion are wont to say, and they count it higher than the words of the original: but none the less, they recognize and acknowledge the debt.

6. Then finally, as a sixth and last item (though perhaps the majority might here be smaller), they would assign to the credit of Christianity the very subordinate place occupied in their religion by ritual, and the complete

avoidance by their creed of all possible confusion between outward and inward purity. They would freely allow that the original impetus, nay more, the very terms of their tenet, are prophetic and Jewish: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," with its many parallels in Old Testament literature, contains the whole doctrine in a nutshell; but at the same time these great sayings were never allowed to exercise adequate influence upon the laws and customs and ritual of the Jewish religion until quite modern days. Christ took up the teaching and enlarged it, so that, upon the whole, his great maxim, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man," must be regarded as original to himself, and the doctrine which is based upon it must be set down to the credit of Christianity.

The members of our imaginary community would do wisely to raise no further debate as to the comparative worth and excellence of the half-dozen items which have been respectively assigned to Jewish and to Christian sources. They will rather be grateful to both religions for the elements of good and truth which they have contributed to the common store. Some of them they will recognize as complementary to each other, none, I think, as antagonistic. Most of them, in a greater or lesser measure of purity, are now possessed alike by both the religions which first produced them; and if either is eager to claim them as its own children and property, that only shows how satisfactorily they have been absorbed by both.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: the way by which one pilgrim travels seems strange and rugged to another, and yet perhaps it is well for him to learn something of his fellow-pilgrim's road. At least let him realize that the many pathways may all lead Godward, and that the world is richer for that the paths are not a few.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.